

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a metal strip using a two-roller casting device wherein the device comprises: a melt pool formed by two oppositely rotating casting rollers with respective casting-roller axes arranged parallel to one another and by two side plates which bear against end sides of the casting rollers, and the side plates are formed of a material and wherein a casting gap is formed by lateral surfaces of the casting rollers, the process comprising:

introducing metal melt into the melt pool; conveying an at least partially solidified metal strip from the melt pool through the casting gap;

during a first time interval, moving the side plates onto the end sides of the casting rollers in a first direction of movement parallel to the casting-roller axes, and

during a second time interval, moving the side plates onto a portion of the lateral surfaces of the casting rollers in a second direction of movement parallel to the casting direction in the casting gap.

2. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first time interval chronologically overlaps the second time interval at least in a subsection of time.

3. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second time interval chronologically overlaps the first time interval at least in a subsection of time.

4. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first time interval starts before the second time interval.

5. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first time interval starts not later than when the metal melt is fed into the melt pool.

6. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, further comprising moving the side plates onto the casting rollers as a function of the wear properties of the refractory material of the side plates.

7. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first time interval is comprised of three successive phases, including

a starting phase, in which the side plates are moved onto the end sides of the casting rollers at a first feed rate which corresponds to material wear to a material of the side plates ~~in the melt pool~~ during the starting phase

a transition phase, in which the side plates are moved onto the end sides of the casting rollers at a second feed rate which corresponds to material wear to the side plates ~~in the melt pool~~ during the transition phase

a steady-state operating phase, in which the side plates are moved onto the end sides of the casting rollers at a third feed rate which corresponds to material wear to the side plates ~~in the melt pool~~ during the steady-state phase.

8. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first time interval is comprised of three successive phases, including,

a starting phase, in which the side plates are pressed onto the end sides of the casting rollers with a first contact pressure which corresponds to material wear to the side plates ~~in the melt pool~~ during the starting phase,

a transition phase, in which the side plates are pressed onto the end sides of the casting rollers with a second contact pressure which corresponds to material wear to the side plates ~~in the melt pool~~ during the transition phase,

a steady-state operating phase, in which the side plates are pressed onto the end sides of the casting rollers with a third contact pressure which corresponds to material wear to the side plates ~~in the melt pool~~ during the steady-state phase.

9. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second time interval starts not later than 30 min after the start of the first time interval.

10. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 7, wherein the second time interval starts substantially at the start of the steady-state operating phase.

11. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein during the second time interval, moving or pressing the side plates onto respective edge portions of the lateral surface of the casting rollers at one of a feed rate or a contact pressure which corresponds to material wear to the side plates ~~in the melt pool~~.

12. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein during the second time interval moving the side plates intermittently comprising alternating movement phases and stationary phases.

13. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 12, wherein during each movement phase, the side plates are moved onto the edge portions of the lateral surface of the casting rollers.

14. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a grind-in phase directly preceding the first time interval and during the grind-in phase the side plates are pressed onto the end sides of the casting rollers at a feed rate or with a contact pressure which corresponds to a mean material wear to the side plates ~~in the melt pool~~.

15. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a grind-in phase preceding the first time interval causing a mean horizontal material wear to the side plates ~~in the melt pool~~, the grinding-in phase being carried out with cold or preheated side plates.

16. - 20. (Canceled).

21. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 7, wherein during the starting phase, the side plates are moved onto the end sides of the casting rollers during a time period of at most 90 sec and the first feed rate is less than 50 mm/h;

during the transition phase, the side plates are moved onto the end sides of the casting rollers during a time period of at most 3 min, at the second feed rate is less than 20 mm/h and;

during the steady-state phase, the side plates are moved onto the end sides of the casting rollers at the third feed rate of between 0.2 mm/h and 4 mm/h.

22. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 21, wherein the first feed rate is from 1 mm/h to 30 mm/h.

23. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 8, wherein during the starting phase, the side plates are pressed onto the end sides of the casting roller during a period of at most 90 sec, and the first contact pressure [[is]] which corresponds to material wear to the side plates of less than 50 mm/h;

during the transition phase, the side plates are pressed onto the end sides of the casting rollers during a period of at most 3 min at a second contact pressure which corresponds to material wear to the side plates of less than 20 mm/h; and

the third contact pressure during the steady-state phase corresponds to material wear to the side plates of between 0.2 mm/h and 4 mm/h.

24. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein the first contact pressure corresponds to material wear to the side plates of from 1 mm/h to 30 mm/h.

25. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 9, wherein the second time interval starts as early as 10 min after the start of the first time interval.

26. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 8, wherein the second time interval starts substantially at the start of the steady-state operating phase.

27. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein the material wear to the side plates is 2 mm/h to 20 mm/h.

28. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein the material wear to the side plates is 4 mm/h to 10 mm/h.

29. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 12, wherein the stationary phases do not exceed 30 min.

30. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 12, wherein the stationary phases do not exceed 5 min.

31. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 13, wherein the side plates are moved 0.01 to 2mm.

32. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 13, wherein the side plates are moved 0.1 to 1mm.

33. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein the side plates are pressed onto the end sides of the casting rollers during a subsection of this grinding-in phase, the side plates being additionally pressed onto a portion of the lateral surfaces of the casting rollers with a high contact pressure in the casting direction, which corresponds to mean material wear to the side plates of at least 10 mm/h.

34. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein the side plates are pressed onto the end sides of the casting rollers during a subsection of this grinding-in

phase, the side plates being additionally pressed onto a portion of the lateral surfaces of the casting rollers with a high contact pressure in the casting direction, which corresponds to mean material wear to the side plates of at least 20 mm/h.

35. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein the side plates are pressed onto the end sides of the casting rollers during a subsection of this grinding-in phase, the side plates being additionally pressed onto a portion of the lateral surfaces of the casting rollers with a high contact pressure in the casting direction

36. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 15, wherein the mean horizontal wear to the side plates is at least 0.33 mm.

37. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 15, further comprising intermediate heating being carried out between the grinding-in phase and the start of the first time interval.

38. (Canceled)